CONTROVERSIAL.

"THE AGITATION OF THOUGHT IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM."

The Editors reserve the right to erase all improper personalities and objectionable expressions found in any article accepted for this department; and they alone shall be the judges.

One Shake More.

BY C. H. BALSBAUGH.

Being familiar with the history of doctrines and theological controversies and philosophic speculations through the centuries and milleniums, I am neither surprised nor roiled nor intimidated by emphatic denials and strong assertions and bold challenges. Having also some knowledge of the Bible, and, I humbly trust, some acquaintance with its Author, I prefer the divine declaration by prophet and apostle, and the divine manifestation in Emmanuel, to anything that human reason and learning can produce in relation to our salvation.

"The offense of the cross" has not ceased. The Logos made flesh is still the stumbling block of the carnal mind, and this mind is in us all.

"A body hast thou prepared me," is too much even for Christendom. That between Deity and flesh should subsist such a vital relation that unless we eat this we have no part in that, still turns back many disciples from following Jesus, justifying themselves with the emphatic, but puerile plea: "This is an hard saying, who can hear it?" as though Omniscience were at fault, and human wisdom must come to its aid.

In the objective in the constitution of Emmanuel lies the principle of and authority for the objective in the church. "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

Etymology will not give us the clue to our problem. So far as it goes it affirms the vital bond between the subjective and objective in Christ and His Church. Repentance and faith are of the "essence" of religion, metaphysician and theologians of all grades and claims, being the judges.

The illustration of the oxygen in the air, is also pertinent to our purpose. Because this is the vital principle are the other constituents therefore not essential to the atmospheric compound? Such air would mean death. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

It is not "too late in the day" to reaffirm the Divine Incarnation as the foundation and interpreter of the totality of life, necessitating the essence to appear as the manifestation. This is the central, all-pervading idea of Christianity. Without it, no divine infleshing. Both the Person and the doctrine are "despised and rejected of men."

"The Word is God," and it "is forever settled in Heaven," it "abideth forever;" by it we "live," and it will be our judge. If Christ is not guilty of self contradiction, forbidding us to use idle words, while He employs them Himself, Mark 16 : 16 and Rev. 22 : 14, will stand when heaven and earth shall pass away.

If repentance and faith are not so profoundly of the essence of religion as to render salvation impossible without them, "let us eat, drink and be merry," we may still be "partakers of the divine nature" and be joint heirs with the Lamb of God, who deemed it a part of His mission to be baptized and wash feet. Of the utter irrelevancy of the reference to infants in this connection I need not say one word.

Let God be God, and let us take our position at the foot of the Cross, docile, meek, and lowly in heart as becomes poor sinners. This we know is safe, and it is no less beatific.

Electing Officers.

BY W. A. CROFFORD.

Under this, we mean to consider our present custom of calling the church together for the purpose of determining by ballot who shall stand upon the "Watch tower of Zion," to warn the surrounding community of impending danger: in short, who shall preach the Gospel. It has long been a query in my mind, whether our practice in that direction is based purely upon apostolic precedent or gospel teaching.

Turn, if you please 1 Cor. 12; read it carefully from beginning to end. The evident conclusion is, that we are planted into the body of Christ representing a natural body; or, as Paul would teach us in the 12th and 13th verses: "For as the body is one and has many members, and all members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by the same spirit are we all baptized into one body." In the 15th verse of the same chapter we have language like this: "If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?" By the same analogy we would say, if the many members of the body would say to the eye, Behold thou art the eye, but we will make thee the ear; or, that thou art the foot we will make thee the hand, would or could it be so? Has one or more members of the body, power to transform one member into a different, or even that it perform the office of a different member. At once you see the folly of such a course; and is it not equally absurd, for the members of the church (body of Christ,) to assume the power, right and privilege to change one member to perform the office of another member; virtually, to change one member into another member. Remember Christ said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches."

We now come to the basis of the practice. Tell the advocate of the man-appointed ministry, it is an error, the first step taken in defense is by claiming the plain word of God,—the only all-sufficient guide. Becoming exultant, feeling as though about to nail his opponent to the ground, he produces the example found in the 1st chapter of Acts and claims the victory. Will we consider?

The person chosen was elected in fulfilment of the prophecy, to take the place of him who by transgression fell, and thus was numbered with the twelve apostles. Now, if we want to take the plain word let us follow it to the letter. Do we have apostles nowadays, or was that office confined only to the day and generation in which Christ lived here upon earth? In unity of sentiment all will admit, that officially the term applied to the twelve and Paul exclusively. (Paul could claim this title only because personally sent by the Savior himself.) Hence, as the office has been discontinued, where is the gospel precedent for electing ministers? This may be argued to be false because apostles also preached. However, 1 Cor. 12 : 28, will show conclusively that it is a distinct office. Before going further, please bear in mind that the Gospel, unless perverted, is non-contradictory in its teachings. When man misrepresents, harmony is destroyed, line upon line bearing record in open admonition to the wrong.

Deacons elected. Ah! says one, did not the church elect deacons? to which we affirm. But was it a spiritual office requiring spiritual work, or was it only for temporal work? By reading the fourth chapter of Acts you will find they were elected as overseers of a certain business, not to preach. True, Stephen preached, which is only an evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit. The soul hungering after righteousness may now be made to exclaim, in the language of the wise man, "There is a way that seemeth right unto men, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Is there not a true foundation, firm and sure whereon to base the ministry of the Gospel? Yes, kind inquirer, come let us examine the truth as it is in Christ, and be free from the shackles of error.

May we ever remember that Christ is the great head of the church, and we are members each one in particular. Now the head alone has power to direct the workings of the individual members of the body. In our natural bodies the head directs or controls the actions of the different members through means of nerves extending from the head to every part. No part acts without the direction of the head through these nerves. When Christ was in the world, all the work of the church, healing the sick, performing miracles, preaching his word, etc., was all through his personal instruction. Having fully established his work he tells his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you, if I go not the Comforter will not come." Again he says, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me," showing the furtherance of his cause by the Holy Spirit, the great nerve center through which Christ bestows spiritual gifts to the various members of the body, thereby continuing the work of salvation.

Every true baptized believer has the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost; we being individually responsible as to how we make use of that gift. For, when he who received the five talents improved, he was rewarded; but the person receiving the one talent, failing to make the proper use, was condemned. Thus Paul clearly understood the weight of this when he said, "Covet earnestly the best gifts, yet shew I unto you a more excellent way"—and that was by improving the gift granted him.

May we all improve the gift which has been given us, and finally receive the approbation of God, is the prayer of your unworthy writer.—Johnstown, Pa.

A Word in Forty-Eight Languages.

The learned Louis Berger was one day walking in Paris when he recognized his old barber, who had been reduced by mistortune to sell nuts in the street for a living.

"Oh, sir, if you could only tell me something to do," said the poor man.

Berger was touched, and after a moment's thought he tore a leaf from his memorandum book, wrote for a few moment's and handed it to the man, saying, "Take this to a printing office and have a hundred copies struck off; here is the money to pay for it. Get a license from the perfecture of police, and sell them at two cents a copy, and you will have bread on the spot. The strangers who visit Paris cannot refuse this tribute to the name of God printed in so many different ways."

The barber did as he was bid, and was always seen at the entrance of the exposition selling the following hand-bill:

THE NAME OF GOD IN FORTY EIGHT LANGUAGES.

Hebrew, *Elohim* or *Eloah*; Oiala tongue, *Den*; Oahidaic, *Elah*; German and Swiss, *Gott*; Assyrian, *Ellah*; Flemish, *Goed*; Syriac and Turkish, *Alah*; Dutch, *Godt*; Manlay, *Alla*; English and old Saxon, *God*; Arabic, *Alla*; language of the Magi, *Orsi*; Teutonic, *Gott*; Danish and Swedish, *Gut*; Old Egyptian, *Teut*; Norwegian, *Gud*; Armorian, *Teuti*; Slavic, *Buch*; Modern Egyptian, *Teun*; Polish, *Bog*; Greek, *Theos*; Pollacca, *Bung*; Creton. *Thios*; Lapp, *Jubinal*; Æolian and Doric, *Ilos*; Finnish, *Jumalr*; Latin, *Deus*; Runic, *As*; Low Latin, *Diex*; Pannonian, *Istu*; Celtic and old Gaelic, *Diu*; Zemblian, *Fetizo*; French, *Dieu*; Hindoostance, *Rain*; Spanish, *Dios*; Coromandel, *Brama*; Portuguese, *Deoa*; Tartar, *Magatel*; Old German, *Diet*; Persian, *Sire*; Provencal, *Diou*; Chinese, *Prussa*; Low Breton, *Done*; Japanese, *Goezur*; Italian, *Dio*; Madagascar, *Zannar*; Irish, *Dteh*; Peruvian, *Puchocammac*."

A few days later he met his benefactor, and told him that he could sell a hundred copies per day, but some perchasers were generous, and he was getting as much as five dollars a day in his new business.—Ex.

"Waiting to be Born Again."

One of the most thrilling cases of salvation which we have met is the following: At ten years of age Henry A. was a swearer, used tobacco, and regularly carried a bottle of liquor. His mother had died when he was a little child, and he felt no restraint from wrong. He plunged into sin. His life for thirty years following was one of dissipation. He was a good workman at brick-making, but would not keep sober long enough to succeed anywhere. He wandered into many places, repeating the same history of vice. At last, in 1863, he was the victim of delirium tremens. That awful experience was endured by him. He prayed to God earnestly for deliverence. He promised to give his heart to Christ if he was spared. His prayer that he might be relieved was answered. He went out upon the village streets. He prayed in a freight car standing on a track along his way. He was ready to drop on his knees on the pavement and plead for the salvation of his soul. At noon he was standing on the sidewalk between two large stores, in the business part of a large village in southern New York. His eyes were closed. He was in prayer; he was pleading for mercy; he was looking for the light of life; his whole soul asked. People wondered that he stood there so long. They thought he might be drunk or crazy. He made no motion; he did not utter a word or prayer aloud. At last some one asked him why he was waiting there. His reply was, "I am waiting to be born again." That was thorough experience; it was soul work. His friends called him to dinner; he would not go! The time for supper came, and he was yet standing there; but during that time a wonderful work was done in his heart. The light shone into his soul; the terrible power of sin was broken; the new birth was granted; joy too great for the lips to speak came to him; he was saved. He met the deliverer; he went down to his home justified. That day salvation came to that house in a new life in the happiness of home. She was a glad Christian wife. A new future and a bright one, opened before that family.—REV. C. P. HARD, in NEW TESTAMENT ILLUSTRATIONS.